

# Mossfield Primary School



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

There is a clear relationship between good attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life. The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576:

*“Meaning of “parent”.*

*In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—*

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
- (b) who has care of him.”*

S.7:

*“Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

S.444:

*“Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.*

*If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”*

The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with school as part of the monitoring and review process.

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body’s objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the schools ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

### **ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and discussion at Parent Consultations. All parents/ carers have access to up to date attendance information using our 'Parent App' facility, and we strongly encourage all parents to join this service.

It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE**

**Mrs C. Jones and Mrs D. Brannan are the lead officers for the monitoring of attendance.**

**Parents and carers may contact them for any queries they may have regarding attendance and punctuality. They can be contacted via the main school office.**

The school commissions support from the Salford Education Welfare Service (E.W.O). These officers support the school in attendance monitoring and compliance.

The school will log summaries of all conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by administrative and attendance Staff.

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Attendance Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

Attendance data is held electronically on the school Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

Returns of school data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

## **SUPPORTING PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

Attendance issues are dealt with on an individual basis, as we know that there are a variety of reasons why children are unable to attend school. Some of the ways that we try to support parents to improve attendance include:

- First day of absence telephone calls to identify the cause of a pupil's absence from school.
- Sending letters to parents requesting a reason for absence if we have been unable to obtain this via telephone.
- Closely monitoring attendance and inviting parents to an attendance panel meeting with the attendance officers (and occasionally the E.W.O.), to identify issues affecting attendance. (This enable us to offer advice, put additional support in place for the child(ren) and contact or signpost to relevant external agencies as appropriate).
- Carrying out Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) work with pupils who have emotional difficulties that impact on attendance. This is completed on a one-to-one basis, and aims to help them to overcome their difficulties and understand the long term impact of missing school.
- Requesting Medical evidence to authorise absences from school that exceed three days. (Following an attendance panel meeting, parents are often asked to provide medical evidence to allow us to authorise any future absences regardless of the number of missed days).
- Referrals to the Education Welfare Service, who also closely monitor attendance, offer advice and support and complete home visits as necessary.
- Issuing Fixed Penalty Warning Letters to parents, advising them that their child has had a number of unauthorised absences, and should they receive any more they may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Requesting Fixed Penalty Notices from the Local Authority (Salford Council), when further unauthorised / unexplained absence marks are received following a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter being received by parents.
- Commencing 'Fast Track' proceedings where attendance is not improving, despite letters being sent and meetings being arranged by the school and/or Education Welfare Officer. This is a 12 week monitoring period, whereby if no attendance improvements are made, legal proceedings may commence. This can result in parents receiving a fine, community service, having a tagging device fitted or in some instances, receiving a custodial sentence.

**We consider legal proceedings to be a last resort, and hope that they are avoided by supporting parents to make to the necessary changes before getting to this point.**

## Punctuality

<b>No parent or child should be present on school grounds before 8:40am</b>	'Kids Kapers' before and after school provision are supervised separately and are allowed entry to the buildings from 7am
<b>School gates open promptly at 8:40am</b>	Pupils may enter their classrooms from this point, where they will be supervised by school staff
<b>School formally starts at 8:50am</b>	All pupils should be inside their classroom by this point, and this is when the teachers take the official registers.
<b>Pupils arriving later than 8:50 are classified as late</b>	They must report to the main school office. They are seen as present in school, but will receive a late mark.  Parents / pupils must sign in using the InVentry system at the main office, giving a reason for their child's lateness.
<b>Registers close at 9:30am</b>	Children arriving after this point can still attend school, but will be marked as absent for the morning session.
<b>School ends at 3:20pm for most pupils</b>	3:15 pm for Nursery Class only

Pupils with poor punctuality disrupt their classes and teachers when entering late and this can cause embarrassment for the child. They may also miss important instructions and information about the day, which severely affects their learning.

### Nursery & Reception Classes

Parents/carers of pupils in the Nursery may come in to the classroom to help their child hang up their belongings.

Once your child moves in to the Reception Class and is settled, we encourage pupils to come in to the classrooms by themselves to hang their belongings. This is to help promote their independence.

### All Year Groups from Year 1 to Year 6

Parents/carers should **not** accompany children into their classrooms.

Teachers are **not** usually able to speak to parents at this time, as they are supervising pupils in class. After school ends is a better time to have a quick word with your child's teacher. If you wish to discuss more complex issues, an appointment should be made.

## Attendance

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law attend the school regularly. Regular attendance is important not just because the law requires it but to ensure children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. There may be occasions where a child has to miss school when they are unwell but any other absences must be kept to a minimum.

### Absences

All of a child's absences from school are classified as either –

- **Authorised**
- **Unauthorised**

**The Headteacher** classifies attendances as 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised' – based on the information given. Parents are not able to authorise absences for their children.

An **Authorised absence** is where full reasons have been given to school and the absence is classed as unavoidable and legitimate.

An **unauthorised absence** may be –

- Where no reason for the absence is offered to school.
- Where a child plays truant.
- Where the reason offered for the absence is not seen as genuine or plausible.
- The absence was seen as avoidable.
- The reason for the absence is weak and unsupported by evidence.

Parents / carers are asked to contact school by letter, phone or in person to give a full reason for any absence. Following this notification, we can only authorise an absence in **genuine** cases of;

- Sickness
- Emergency medical or dental appointments.
- Hospital appointments.
- Family emergency e.g. Death of a close family member.
- Religious observances.

For all of the above, evidence may be sought by school (e.g. an appointment card or hospital letter)

Furthermore, previous such absences will be taken into account and excessive requests may be refused.

Where a child's attendance is of concern, school may also require evidence of sickness absence with a doctor's note being required in order to authorise the absence.

Where we are unaware for the reason for your child's absence, we will attempt to contact you by telephone or letter to ascertain the reason for your child's absence from school. Occasionally home visits may be used as well. We aim to check that you are aware that your child has not come to school (to avoid rare cases of truancy) and find out the reason why.

If your child is absent for a genuine reason, you must inform school as soon as possible.

Unacceptable reasons for absence may include but are not limited to;

- Shopping for clothes or shoes
- Illness of a sibling or parent
- Visiting relatives , including those abroad.
- Non urgent medical treatment
- Oversleeping
- Unauthorised family holidays or day trips

We will record such absences as **unauthorised**.

Receiving 10 or more unauthorised marks (1 school day = 2 marks) either through non-attendance, unauthorised holidays or lateness will now result in a fixed penalty notice fine of £60 under the Education Act of 1996 section 444(1)(a).

We also operate attendance 'fast track' procedures against parents who consistently do not send their children to school with enough regularity which involve meetings with an Education Welfare Officer and a time period to make improvements.

## **Family holidays and leave of absence**

**Parents should NOT take their children out of school during term time to go on holiday or a family visit.**

Parents have no entitlement to authorized leave to take their child on holiday in term-time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be completely satisfied that the circumstances are fully exceptional and therefore warrant the granting of leave with the resulting detrimental effect on a child's educational progress.



## **Exceptional Circumstance**

The Headteacher may authorise a leave under 'exceptional circumstance' only where clear evidence is presented. Parents should understand that this is not granted as a right. Each case is considered on its own merits and will only be granted if these exceptional circumstance can **clearly** be shown.

All applications for exceptional leave should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing and well in advance where this is possible. The application should clearly outline why the request is considered exceptional. Any supporting evidence such as medical certificates, death certificates, doctor's notes etc. must be copied and included. Applications without supporting evidence are very unlikely to be approved.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may be;

- A parent, grandparent or close relative is seriously ill, or a death in the immediate family
- A parents employer is unable to grant leave during the school holidays (This category is restricted to Armed Forces, Blue Light and UK Prison Service)
- A charitable respite care holiday, for a family with a disabled child.
- To attend the wedding of a family member (**up to 5 days only in this category**)

This is not an exhaustive list, as each case is judged on its own merits. However, in all cases, convincing verification and evidence of the reason must be supplied to the Headteacher.

**IN ALL CASES, THE MAXIMUM LEAVE WE WILL AUTHORISE IS 10 SCHOOL DAYS (5 school days to attend a wedding)**

In most cases, the leave requested would be expected to be **much less than this**.

Any requests extending beyond 10 days will be declined, whatever the reason presented.

All requests will be judged as to whether they are reasonable in length to achieve the stated aims.

For instance, a request for two weeks absence to attend a family wedding taking place on a single day would not be considered reasonable, even if the wedding is taking place aboard.

Exceptional circumstances do **NOT** include -

- Because a holiday is cheaper in term time
- The accommodation wanted is not available in the school holidays
- To assist in addressing the perceived mental health needs of parents or pupils.
- Difficult or challenging home circumstances that lead a parent to believe they need a holiday.
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Not having had a family holiday for a long time
- Visiting relatives in foreign countries.
- Having already booked the holiday, and now unable to change the booking.
- Holidays 'held over' and not taken during the COVID lockdowns – such holidays should already have been rescheduled, or now be scheduled during school holiday periods.

The Headteacher will also look very carefully at -

- The effect on the pupil's education, especially if leave is at the beginning of term, near to tests / SATS or other significant school events.
- Whether your child has previously missed school because of special leave in the past.

**We do not supply schoolwork for pupils who are going on unauthorised holidays or other unauthorised leave.**

These pupils should be in school, and the provision of work will not make up for the learning and educational experiences they will miss by not attending.

### **Rewarding Excellent Attendance**

We recognise that most children at Mossfield Primary School show excellent attendance and we aim to reward all children who attend punctually and regularly.

Different types of awards are presented to individual pupils and class groups for good attendance at different stages of the school year.

Trophies for pupils with 100% attendance (with no late marks) and 98% attendance and better (with a maximum of 3 late marks) are given in special assemblies at the end of each school year.

### **Late Collected Pupils**

The school day ends at 3:20pm and it is important that your child is collected promptly.

We appreciate that there may be rare occasions where a parent / carer may be late. Where there is an emergency or unplanned event which means a pupil may be collected late we ask that you notify the school office so they are able to get a message to your child's teacher.

Pupils from Nursery to Year 2 who have not been collected at 3:20pm will be brought across to the main school office. Children in KS2 know to come to the main office and advise the office staff that they have not been collected. Where we are aware of a reason for late collection office staff will supervise the child until the parent arrives.

In instances where the office has not been informed, they will attempt to contact the parent by phone and ascertain how long they will be. School policy regarding this is as follows -

- Once a non-collected child is at the office, the office staff will attempt to contact the parent / carer by phone. In the majority of cases the parent is contacted, explains how long they will be and the child remains in the office, supervised until they are collected.
- If the parent is contacted by phone, and in an emergency wants another adult to collect their child, this is allowed as long as we are able to ascertain their identity.
- If we are unable to contact the parent / carer we will attempt to contact one of the other contacts listed on the child's emergency contact list, in the order that they have been provided by the parent. We would then ask them to collect the pupil bringing suitable ID if they are not already known to us.
- If we are unable to contact anybody on the emergency contact sheet, we may try to contact people known to us as being a family friend / school friend or neighbour to get in contact with the parent. However, the child cannot be collected by this person unless explicit consent is given by the parent / carer.
- If we are still unable to contact anybody, we will wait with the child until 4.30pm, which is 1 hour and 10 minutes after the end of school. After this point the child will be deemed to have been abandoned by the parent / carer if we have still not heard from them. Social services and the police will then be informed where appropriate.
- Where a child is repeatedly left uncollected or collected late, this would become a matter of concern and can be reported to Social Services.

Parents / carers of late collected pupils will be required to sign out the pupil using our inVentry system in the main office. This must be done by the collecting adult giving clearly the reason why the child has been collected late. Simply typing LATE is unacceptable.

There are other instances whereby it is **NOT** acceptable. For example;

- Collecting pupils at other schools then arriving late to collect pupils here.
- High school pupils collecting siblings and are therefore not arriving here to collect brothers / sisters until some-time after 3:20pm.
- Traffic whereby this is a frequent occurrence. We would expect you make reasonable adjustments such as setting off earlier.
- Also regular late collections without valid reasons.

These are unacceptable reasons. Arrangements should be made to ensure your child is collected from school on time.

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